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UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 000158

SIPDIS

FOR OES/IHA DANO WILUSZ

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ECON SENV ES

SUBJECT: INDOOR AIR POLLUTION IN EL SALVADOR

REF: 2006 STATE 192919

1) Approximately 65 percent of Salvadoran households (87 percent in rural areas) utilize firewood for energy needs, mainly cooking. The high usage of firewood, often in poorly constructed stoves, is the main contributor to indoor air pollution in the country. This dependence on firewood also exacerbates deforestation in El Salvador, which counts only 12 percent of its territory as woodlands, and only 3 percent is virgin forest.

2) The GOES carries out limited interventions through two ministries in regards to indoor air pollution, the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) and the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN). The MSP focuses primarily on information and training, giving educational talks to schools in rural and urban communities on the negative health effects caused by the use of wood burning stoves. These talks are sometimes co-facilitated with the MARN.

3) The MARN carries out most of their interventions through their Decontamination of Critical Areas project, which includes a four year, \$1.3 million portion for air quality that ends in 2008. This project focuses almost exclusively on vehicular emissions in metropolitan San Salvador, which the MARN considers the primary concern for metropolitan areas. There is some minor involvement in the cities of Santa Ana, San Miguel, and Sonsonate, also in vehicular emissions. Interventions are focused on carrying out base line diagnostics, developing air pollution legislation, and producing a national strategy document that will be completed as a deliverable at project's end.

4) In addition, there is some work being done through various non-government organizations in the promotion of improved wood stoves that consume less wood and produce less smoke inside the home. Most of this work is uncoordinated and not directly supported by the GOES.

5) The GOES considers that the use of unimproved wood burning stoves is the primary contaminant for IAP in non metropolitan areas. USAID recommends the promotion of locally available improved cook stoves to mitigate this impact. Given El Salvador's advanced level of deforestation, this would also contribute to the conservation of the country's forests and watersheds.

Glazer